

From: Stuart COLEMAN [mailto:scoleman34@gmail.com]
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Subject: Strong Support for Bill 10--Council Meeting Testimony

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Dear City Council Chairs and Members,

My name is Stuart Coleman, and I am writing to voice the Surfrider Foundation's strong support for Bill 10 and the initiative to ban single-use plastic bags on Oahu. Along with more than 250,000 supporters, activists and members around the country, Surfrider has five chapters, several student clubs and thousands of members in Hawaii who have helped pass similar bans across the state.

The Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our oceans, waves and beaches through conservation, activism, research and education (CARE). Each month our volunteers host beach cleanups across the state, and we always find plastic bags polluting our beaches and waterways. These toxic tumbleweeds often blow into the ocean where they kill countless sea birds, marine mammals, sea turtles and other creatures each year due to ingestion and entanglement.

As part of our grassroots Rise Above Plastics Campaign, the Surfrider Foundation's chapters and members support efforts like Bill 10 to reduce the pollution and waste from single-use plastics. As you probably know, plastic bags are the most common consumer item on Earth and Americans go through more than 100 billion each year, yet less than 5% are ever recycled. Most are used for an average of 15 minutes, yet these petroleum-based products will persist in the environment for over a century. On Oahu, this bill would help get rid of hundreds of millions of single-use plastic bags that clog up our waste stream each year.

In order to deal with this plague of plastic waste, countries across the world and counties across the US have banned plastic bags. In fact, with the successful bans on Maui, Kauai and most recently on the Big Island, Oahu is the only county that hasn't banned them. With your leadership, we are now poised to make Hawaii the first in the country to have a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags!

In the process of trying to pass a statewide Bag Bill that would reduce single-use plastic and paper bags, we created a broad coalition of support, including many environmental groups, community organizations, businesses, retailers, government agencies, schools and thousands of citizens. With the failure of state legislators to pass the Bag Bill, we now turn to the City Council and ask you to pass Bill 10 and help clean up our oceans, beaches and coastal areas.

With tourism being the economic engine of the state, it makes sense to reduce the litter and waste from plastic bags that mar Hawaii's natural beauty. Just as our kupuna did fine without plastic bags, we all need to conserve and make sacrifices to preserve Hawaii's environment for our visitors, kama'aina and generations of keiki to come. We ask you to pass this bill and help us to live up to our state motto: "Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka Aina I Ka Pono O Hawaii--The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness." Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha, Stuart

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